

## Urban planning responses to climate change adaptation in Pacific cities

The urban population continues to increase in the Pacific Island Countries (PIC), with the metropolitan centres concentrating between 13% (PNG) and 56% (Fiji) of the national population. Cities in this region are struggling with the effects of climate change. There is limited knowledge on urban planning and its contribution to climate change adaptation (CCA). The main research question in this project is: How does urban planning contribute to addressing climate change adaptation in cities in the Pacific Island Countries?

The objectives of the project include:

1. To investigate the role of urban planning and its contribution to disaster management and CCA in PIC cities.
2. To analyse current policies, programmes, projects and practices within urban planning contributing to CCA and provide policy recommendations based on research findings.
3. To analyse the role of IT tools to contribute to CCA through building “smart climate resilient cities”.
4. To theorise on the interface between Southern urban planning and CCA.

A conceptual framework will be built following a “Southern urban planning” theoretical approach, focusing on the particular aspects of urban planning in PIC, as well as collaborative planning and governance principles in relation to CCA (Obj. 4). The development of this conceptual framework and the compilation and analysis of existing policies, programmes, projects and practices will provide a robust and innovative analysis and policy recommendations (Obj. 2) and clear pathways on how urban planning can contribute to CCA (Obj. 1). Technological innovations using phone applications and other tools will address the lack of effective communication as one of the problems related to disaster management in some PIC (IFRC, 2020) and will contribute to the discussion of smart climate resilient cities in PIC, which is an overlooked scholarly area (Obj. 3).

The analysis will focus on a case study of a city in the PIC, with preference given to Suva, Port Vila, Honiara and Port Moresby as the largest “Global South cities” in the area. The lessons learned in this project will be useful for other cities in the PIC.

The project will use a mixed-methods approach. The quantitative methods will be statistical analysis of quantitative data (SDGs indicators) from government and other stakeholders. The three qualitative methods for primary data collection will be interviews, focus groups and policy document review. The mixed-methods approach will allow for data triangulation, validity and comparison.

Project deliverables include:

- PhD thesis (UQ & Exeter);
- Conceptual framework on the interface between urban planning and CCA, with a focus on Southern Urban Planning (UQ)
- Database and analysis of policies, programmes and projects addressing urban disaster management and CCA in case study (UQ);
- Policy brief and report, including policy recommendations (UQ);
- Analysis of tools to contribute to CCA through a lens of a “smart climate resilient cities” approach (Exeter);

- Two papers (student as lead author, with assistance from both supervisors);
- Research training on quantitative and qualitative analysis (UQ & Exeter);
- Organization and delivery of engagement event at the 2024 World Urban Forum (Exeter).